

Thomas Pinckney to Andrew Jackson, January 9, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

THOMAS PINCKNEY TO JACKSON.

Milledgeville, January 9, 1814.

Sir: Your Letter dated the 26th of December did not reach me until the last evening. Your preceeding dispatches of the 14th December had led me to conclude what would probably soon be the diminished state of your force. I therefore immediately ordered to your support Col: Williams' Regiment of 12 Months Men, and wrote to the Governor of Tennessee urging him to complete the requisition of the Secretary of War of 1500 Men for the time authorised by Law. I learn from the Person who brought your Letter that Colonel Williams' Regiment is marching to join you; if the 1500 of the Quota should also be forwarded by Govr. Blount you will in my opinion have force sufficient for the object to be attained. the largest computation that I have heard of the hostile creek Warriors made by any competent judge is 4000. At least one thousand of them have been killed or disabled, they are badly armed and supplied with ammunition, little doubt therefore can exist that 2000 of our Men would be infinitely superior to any number they can collect: we have beside the assistance of the Cherokees (and now the Chickasaws) in your quarter; the friendly Creeks with the Georgians, and probably the Choctaws with the Mississippi Troops. If this should reach you in time, I would therefore recommend that you should not embarrass yourself with the 60 days mounted men, for admitting that you can obtain shortly a sufficient supply of bread stuff and corn for forage, which seems doubtful, and if each mounted man were to lead with him a pack horse, that horse could not carry more than eight days scanty subsistence for himself, the man who leads him and the horse that man rides: it must therefore be nearly impracticable with Troops thus provided to

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penetrate 150 miles at this season of the year into an Enemy's Country where you can not depend on obtaining subsistence, fight at least one and perhaps more battles, destroy the hostile Towns in your route and return to your Deposit of Provisions in the above time: and if practicable the necessity of retiring would render the advantages obtained of comparatively little importance; as has been already proved by the victories gained by the Tennessee and Georgia Troops not having been attended with more decisive consequences. The only mode therefore in which it appears to me that you can obtain permanent advantages is to rely upon the States Quota of detached Militia for 6 months and Col: Williams' regular Regiment: by the time they have joined you may probably have accumulated a supply of provisions at Fort Strother, and even then there are but two modes in which you can advance with security on account of provisions; the one is that which I originally suggested of embarking your provision, spare ammunition etc on one of the Rivers and marching near the course of the River in concert with the progress of the boats; driving before you the Indians and destroying their settlements on your route to prevent them from impeding the progress of your boats or interrupting your communication with them. by this mode if any impediments should be in the navigation, the army might be marched to the shoals or fall and would afford a force sufficient to convoy the boats with their lading beyond them. The other is to cut a Road for Waggon on your progress, and to intrench a Camp sufficient to repel Indians which might be effected by the Army in two days, in every thirty or forty miles of your progress, leaving a party of about 100 men in each with 6 or 8 waggon attached thereto, which waggon should be kept constantly running to and from the adjoining post to keep up an uninterrupted supply of provisions drawn from your principal Magazine at Fort Strother: about 5 such posts and 40 Waggon would insure your subsi[s]tance, secure the stores brought on and relieve the sick and wounded; these garrisons might also repair the intermediate roads and furnish small escorts for the Waggon passing between and this at the expense of 10 or 12 days labour, and 500 men left as Garrisons, which would probably reduce your force to 15 or 18 hundred men, with which number well supplied I should have no doubt that you would be superior alone and much more so when united with the Cherokee and Chickasaw

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force, to any number the hostile Creeks could bring into the field. Both these methods will appear slow and perhaps not altogether suited to the ardent zeal and energy which you have hitherto manifested; but upon the fullest consideration I have been able to give to the subject, they have in my opinion the fairest prospect of being attended with permanent success.

I am happy to inform you that Genl Floyd has so far recovered from the effects of his wound that he will probably take the command of his army: arrangements were made for him to commence his movement in advance from Coweta tomorrow; and I hope in the course of 10 days he will have established a strong post at the Tuckabatchie Town at the bend of the Talipoosa about 25 miles from the confluence with the Coosa: as he will then have his communications sound by a chain of posts from Fort Hawkins on the Okmulgee to the Talipoosa, he will be able to act with effect on the strong settlements in the Fork. The friendly Indians state to Genl Floyd that the army of Mobile on the 30th ulto destroyed the Town of Chooksaputka on the Alabama between thirty and forty miles below the Forts and that a firing was heard afterwards near Tustigee.

The Conduct of Majr Genl Cocke appears to be unmilitary, and if you had previously issued contrary orders to him or to Genl White highly reprehensible: and such as would be a fit subject for the animadversion of a Court Martial: of this however you who are acquainted with all the attendant circumstances can form the most correct judgment. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Your Most Obedient Servant.